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ABSTRACT

This issue of the Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) Courier contains the following contributions related to the theme of unity in the diversity of interests and approaches to adult/informal education: "Unity in Diversity--The Future of Adult Education in Asia and the South-Pacific Region" (Rajesh Tandon); "Notes on a Theme" (Chia Mun-Onn); "A Brief Review of Adult Education in Asia Today" (Lim Hoy Pick); "Community Education in Promoting Peace and Justice" (A. T. Ariyaratne); "Development-Oriented Adult Education and Life-Long Learning" (Heribert Hinzen); "Government/NGO (Nongovernmental Organization) Relations--Focus on the Philippines" (Horacio Morales, Jr.); "Education and Development--Cause for Concern in the Lao PDR (People's Democratic Republic)" (Somsak J.); "Old Values and New Paradigm in Adult Education" (Chris Duke); "Elimination of Illiteracy in China by the Year 2000" (Guan Shixiong); "An Open Letter to All Adult Educators" (Usa Duongsaa); and "An Emerging Adult Literacy Prospect for Fiji" (Adele Jones). (NLA)

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ADULT EDUCATION IN THE 90s : UNITY IN DIVERSITY

ASPBAE COURIER NO. 53

DECEMBER 1991

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ADULT EDUCATION IN THE 90s : UNITY IN DIVERSITY

ASPBAE COURIER NO. 53

DECEMBER 1991

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Colombo, Sri Lanka

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INTRODUCTION

This special number on ADULT EDUCATION IN THE 90s : UNITY IN DIVERSITY is issued in time for the General Assembly to be held in Tagaytay City, Philippines from 09-14 December, 1991.

The hallmark of adult / nonformal education is diversity. In the Asian South Pacific context this creative diversity is re-echoed in the geographical, cultural, religious, linguistic, political and economic diversity of this vast region which is home to half of humankind. Within this challenge in diversity ASPBAE has worked successfully for over two decades in providing a network for national and regional organizations mainly of the nongovernmental sector in order to share their common experiences and challenges.

The unity in this diversity of interests and approaches to adult/nonformal education is the guiding faith and belief in the improvement and development of human beings in their societies to live in amity, dignity and peace. Respecting this diversity is the other dimension of unity. The country papers amply demonstrate this diversity and are presented to analyze common problems of the countries in the region.

The editor wishes to thank all contributors for so readily responding to the urgent request for papers and articles. He also records his thanks and appreciation of the help given to him by the Secretary General of ASPBAE. Without his active support this could not have been published in time for the General Assembly.

The Editor

UNITY IN DIVERSITY : THE FUTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN ASIA AND THE SOUTH-PACIFIC REGION

Rajesh Tandon

The world today is at a critical juncture. Events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the recent Gulf war on the other have created a scenario of a uni-polar world where global capitalism seems to be the only functioning economic order appropriate for the last decade of the 20th century. We have reached a stage today where the world, and our region in particular, faces some serious challenges for the future of our civilization. Let me elaborate these challenges and the likely role that adult education can play in response to them in the future.

Challenges

The first major challenge is the rapid internationalization of economies. Globalization of markets and capital has become the only path to development and progress. Countries of the region have become economically interlinked to each other and to the global economic order. Economic globalization is also resulting in political globalization on the one hand and cultural homogenization on the other. Jeans, Pepsi Cola, and rock music are some of the showpieces of "modern" culture spreading slowly in all the countries of the region.

The second challenge is the daunting presence of poverty and deprivation in many countries of the region. The economic variation in countries of the region can be seen by such examples as Japan on the one hand and Bangladesh on the other. Yet the persistent presence of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, deprivation, dislocation in many countries of the region has reached chronic and acute proportions. As a consequence and partly due to other reasons, the response of national policy makers and decision makers is to take an apathetic posture towards problems of poverty. The poor have been ignored in considerations of developmental policies. The only feasible response currently utilized by national decision makers and other regional bodies is to take palliative measures and distribute welfare, food and other subsidies to the poor. The transformation of the economy, polity and social relations in order to overcome poverty is no longer the main focus of national and multi-lateral decision makers.

The third challenge is the challenge of ensuring "common good". The global capitalist economic order and a welfarist and charitable response to the problems of poverty and the poor are resulting in individual and privatised perspectives of well-being, quality of life, standard of living, etc. The philosophical and political concept of ensuring "common good" has disappeared both from the debates on social transformation and from the planning of strategies in national and multi-lateral decision making structures. It is not even clear how one can establish elements of a national consensus and a regional framework for the "common good".

The fourth challenge in the region is the growing restlessness and associated violence with questions of ethnic identity. In region after region, country after country, minority groups, subgroups, and other ethnic formations are raising questions of their belongingness and identity in the national and regional mainstream. In some cases, these questions arise politically but in others through violent means. But the challenge of ethnic identity is more visible in the countries of this region than any where else.

Role of adult education

What then is the role of adult education in the face of such challenges? In my view, the most important contribution of adult education in the coming period in the region is to continue to address the concerns and problems, and the hopes and aspirations of the poor themselves. Under the pressure of a global capitalist economic order and the hurried response to problems of development in many countries of the region, adult education is being called upon to play a limited, technical role. Adult education is being utilized to promote preparation of a working class of the future in building their technical competence and vocational skills. Important though it is, this technicalizes the potential contribution of adult education and undermines its philosophical and political role. Adult educators like us from this region must ensure that our vision, our aspirations, our capacities, our institutions continue to remain responsive to and linked to the struggles of the poor and not get co-opted into a technical profession preparing white and blue collar workers of the future economic order.

The second role for adult education in the region is to create a climate of tolerance and mutual appreciation. Respecting the differences in religion, caste, culture, language, perspectives, gender is perhaps a major requirement

of individual and collective human functioning at this juncture in many countries of the region. Adult education has the possibility to contribute methodologically as well as philosophically towards elaborating ways in which people in our countries and region can learn to respect other's point of view, their experiences, their modes, styles, aspirations and value the differences. And forge within that configuration of differences, a consensus around desirable elements of common good.

A third contribution of adult education in the region in the coming period is to strengthen the possibility of a sustainable life style. The problems of environment, degradation of natural resources, pollution, destruction of a natural balanced regenerative habitat are essentially problems of life-style. Unless we - as individuals, families, communities and nations - come to terms with the question of a sustainable life style consistent with our natural ecology, the problems of environment and pollution will not go away. Adult education, therefore, has a significant role to play in elaborating and promoting the elements of such a sustainable life style consistent with the different ecological environments.

And finally adult education can help in regaining a sense of indigenous cultural identity among communities of our region. The most devastating consequence of a uni-polar world is the homogenization of cultures. The socio-diversity inherent in the diverse and varied cultural mix of our region is being slowly but surely eroded and destroyed. Our region has been the crucible of many profound elements of human civilization. The great and vigorous cultures of Japan, China, Indonesia and the Indian subcontinent continue to inspire, even today, other peoples in different parts of the world. Yet, our own people, children and youth, poor and rich, rural and urban, are beginning to discard our cultural heritage in the race to become "modern". Our region has the potential to provide cultural and moral leadership to the world at this critical juncture. And adult education can contribute to strengthen our appreciation of, and capacities for rejuvenating, our popular knowledge, folk culture and traditional wisdom.

The challenge for us adult educators of the region, and our colleagues and institutions, is to shape our practice to become relevant to our people. And we hope that ASPBAE as a regional mechanism can help make that possible.

NOTES ON A THEME

Chia Mun -Onn

Unity in Diversity is indeed a politically "neutral" theme for the Assembly. It takes as a starting point, the different cultural, religious, economic and political circumstances in which adult education is being practised and the implicit recognition of self-determination each member association should have in the way adult education should move. Again while we share similar aims in adult education we may differ in our approach as to the means by which such aims may be achieved.

I think we should be brave enough to admit that even in a functionist system of adult education as in Singapore which avowedly emphasizes skills training there is enough space for human building. Adult educators can work within the system to incorporate elements of personal development like retirement planning, art appreciation and problem-solving skills which should enable adults to enjoy the fruits of their labour, a far better alternative than slogan-chanting from one political rally to another with empty stomachs! After all is not adult education about proaction, adaptation and collaboration? Are we not in the business of pursuing peace as a means and an end? I fail to understand how the state machinery can be dismantled in the name of peace when lives are wasted - more often in a struggle which ends up replacing one oppressor by another. Someone in the recent Finland meeting recounted how foreign newspapers were banned by the former Communist regime. Now the newly independent state has done what the former rulers did. Only it is the Communist newspapers that get the axe this time!

In Singapore and very much so in Thailand, Indonesia and Hong kong there is enough to keep adult educators out of the way of the secret police by getting involved through the system in complementing the work done by the government in education and participating in informed discussions and dialogues to bring about change peacefully. A confrontational or adversarial or worse still militant approach is definitely going to set the clock back for adult education in the East Asian societies of China, Korea and South-east Asia.

Personally the Tainanmen incident is a fiasco in popular education. More often than not the so called peace educators are nowhere to be seen or heard when bullets start whizzing and "targets" humans or otherwise get precision - bombed. During the Gulf War the peace educators went into what someone described as "self-censorship" in shocked disbelief of their inability to bring about any peaceful resolution.

Adult education then becomes a reactive process. But this can be perceived as a challenge to the legitimacy of the government. The governments in the countries represented in ASPBAE have no problem in recognizing the usefulness of adult education in nation-building, economic and community development. They have great difficulty in discerning if adult education is a friend or foe when it comes to maintaining peace and harmony; and more so on human rights issues which when unmasked are really about the "whys" of who gets what.

I think then ASPBAE as a whole must sensitize itself to the differing contexts in which adult education is being practised. Recognizing these give ASPBAE the "Diversity" and respecting these give it the "Unity".

Promoting dialogue

One of the enlightenments of looking at adult education from a regional perspective is the need to promote dialogue between the sub-regions. In absolute terms it means reaching out to the 1.1 billion in China and the 800 million in India. Operationally it amounts to using the language of the minority to communicate with the majority. The use of the English language immediately places those with a British colonial past at an advantage. To literacy workers up in the hill villages of Chiengmai, learning English makes little sense. Yet this is the common language imposed on these non-speakers when interacting with the rest of the world. My point is this: unless we recognize this disparity in communication effectiveness any attempt to draw them into any meaningful participation will fail. It is also a geopolitical reality that Malay is spoken by 150 million inhabitants in South-east Asia. I wonder at times if ever any of these adult educators toiling in the rice fields of Indonesia and

Thailand can have the opportunity to share their feelings and insights with the rest of the world. In the same breath I am also hopeful that we might somehow break through these barriers that they are not alone and many within the region are dirtying their hands to bring literacy to the people under different circumstances. This notion of a fraternity existing amongst adult educators certainly buttresses this theme of unity in diversity.

But unity is a tenacious matter and must be distinguished from uniformity or conformity. It is therapeutic to think of unity - there is a comforting sense of order and purpose. There are issues relating to the extent to which ASPBAE is representative of the region as a whole. But before we can even begin to consider these we will have to know what and who ASPBAE stands for. The field has to be qualified and quantified. This will then help us decide on the question of centralization and funding as well as on other issues.

More importantly we need to recognise what holds ASPBAE together. One reason would be that the variety in form and practice of adult education can give practitioners a broader frame of reference; that there are alternatives from which choices could be made. Interaction amongst adult educators can then be an enriching and enduring experience.

These are the concerns that I hope to bring along to the Assembly in the Philippines. I have worked on this idea of networking as a follow-up to the New Delhi Workshop (November'90). There are two aspects to this work of information dissemination / publication:

1. The first involves a linking-up of the national associations and NGOs comprising ASPBAE for the purpose of collecting and collating information.

2. The second looks at the set-up of these organizations to enable information to be received, processed and applied (used).

At another level, the content/message to be transmitted has to give a composite picture of the region and user-friendly enough to allow for cross-country comparison and more in-depth study of issues unique or universal to the region.

More information

We can begin with some crude standardization of data collection. For example legislation affecting the practice of adult education [including the laws governing the printing and distribution of adult education materials], and statistics on the funding of adult education programs. In short we should seek to understand "who benefits?", "why are we doing this or that?" and "why are we not doing it that way?"

Such answers will enable adult educators to engage in more informed discussion, with a deeper appreciation of each other's culture, economic and political situation.

Here are some concluding remarks to what I have said. It may not take us long to acknowledge that the coming together of adult educators in ASPBAE is synergic or the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts. However we must never allow unity to gloss over the differences that we have. Unity can become an illusion.

Historically the ability to articulate demands and negotiate changes is more developed in the West than in the East. This is the case of ASPBAE with India and Sri Lanka having stronger traditions in democratic practice as compared to China and Korea where the Confucianistic scheme of things still pervades. This has implications for ASPBAE when people of different levels of "openess" are drawn together to decide on issues. As I have found silence (in China) and a smile (in Thailand) do not always connote consent or agreement.

If adult education is an evolutionary process then we must really look at change as a gradual undertaking by the people. The prime concern for adult educators is in human building - empowering and enabling individuals to participate in change and to survive within the system in the Darwinian sense.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF ADULT EDUCATION IN ASIA TODAY

Lim Hoy Pick

Through a history of colonisation and domination of western political powers, many countries in Asia had adopted western systems of education. For instance, former British colonies, such as Burma, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore adopted the British system; former French colonies such as Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia adopted the French system; and, former Dutch colony of Indonesia adopted the Dutch system. China which had close diplomatic relations with America in the early years of the Chinese Republic, adopted the American system, while the British colony of Hong Kong adopted the British system and the Portuguese colony of Macau adopted the Portuguese system. As a consequence of the American occupation of the Philippines and Japan immediately after the World War Two, the educational systems in these two countries were influenced by the American system.

Though these countries adopted western models for the formal education systems they tended to hold their own in non-formal education. Long before the import of western education, they had their own traditional institutions for the inculcation of cultural values and practices, arts of healing as well as training in occupational skills. Up to this day, traditional clan and business associations, Taoist temples and Shinto shrines, herbal medicine and accupuncture, folk art, music and dance are still prevalent in Asian societies and play a very important role in adult education.

Two main categories of countries based on their national economies can be discerned in Asia - the agricultural and industrialized countries. The former include Pakistan, India, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Burma, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and the latter include Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Majority of the people in Asia live in rural areas, their educational levels are low and their illiteracy rates are very high. Therefore the problem of illiteracy still remains a great challenge for adult education. Another serious problem in Asian countries is rural poverty. Landless rural poor swamp the big cities in large numbers, creating slums and squatter colonies around them. Madras and Bombay of India, Dhaka of

Bangladesh, Bangkok of Thailand, Jakarta of Indonesia and Manila of the Philippines are examples of such cities. Some measures taken to combat the problem of rural poverty include land reforms, introduction of appropriate technologies, training of income-generating skills and setting up of labour intensive factories in rural areas. In fact, most of these measures involve the education and training of adults. It appears that adult education holds the key to the elimination of rural poverty and its associated problems.

Problems in industrialized countries are quite different from those of agricultural countries. The last two decades have seen rapid economic growth in South East and East Asia, particularly Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore - the so-called four small dragons and also known as the newly industrialized countries (NICs). In the early years of industrialization, much emphasis was placed on education and training of manpower. As industries expanded at a very fast rate, shortage of labour was felt and consequently more women including housewives were recruited into the labour force. By the late 70s, the NICs had achieved high economic growth and the people enjoyed a fairly high standard of living. Meanwhile, these countries competed among themselves and also with developed nations in marketing their products internationally. In order to cut down costs of production and increase productivity, they began to replace labour intensive industries with capital intensive ones; they introduced automation and mechanization; and quickly moved into high technology with great emphasis on computer and information systems. This is the second industrial revolution of the NICs which has brought about rapid social, technological and environmental changes, upsetting ecological balances and causing much human suffering and cultural disorientation. Nevertheless, it has also brought about economic success to each nation, affluence to society and prosperity to individuals. In such rapid changing societies, adult educators must always anticipate future needs of the country, and create awareness among the people of the various changes and their implications, so that they can adapt themselves more readily to such changes. Some changes, particularly in technology, which make machines and technical skills rapidly obsolete will necessitate training and retraining of the work force.

There has been a common practice among some Asian countries to use national campaigns and cultural movements for social education and community development, for instance, the Sarvodaya Shramadana of Sri Lanka, the Saemaul Undong of South Korea, the Gotong Royong of Malaysia and national campaigns of Singapore. In recent years, Indonesia and Thailand have launched massive literacy campaigns in their efforts to eradicate illiteracy. To a great extent these national campaigns and cultural movements have succeeded not only in revitalising national cultures, but also in resisting undesirable aspects of foreign cultures.

In the developing countries of Asia, some basic issues such as poverty, illiteracy and primary health care will continue to be the main preoccupations for adult education. With the support of their governments, assistance of adult educators and their own efforts, the rural people should be able to help themselves and solve their own problems. The newly industrialized countries are more fortunate for they have the necessary human and material resources for development. However, their success will depend on how well they adjust themselves to rapid social and technological changes, their national productivity, and ability to compete in the world market. Hence, adult education in these countries needs to focus on community development, training and retraining of workers, and the upgrading of professional and administrative competencies of some sectors of the population.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN PROMOTING PEACE AND JUSTICE

A.T. Ariyaratne

The scope of community education

What is community education? I would define it as an aggregate of integrated formal and non-formal learning processes involving and ensuring the meaningful participation of all members of the community, providing them with equal opportunities to look into their own personalities, develop an insight into the realities of their own family and community life, raise their consciousness about their natural and social environment, place themselves in the appropriate level of their cultural evolutionary scale and help themselves reach a vision of life and community they would choose as their future.

Community education misses nothing and encompasses everything. The community educator is the motivator, facilitator, enabler, initiator, practising preceptor and the visionary with a mission. What about the scope of the community itself? That depends on each community educator. One can choose as one's community a cluster of families, a hamlet, a village, an urban community, the national community or even the global community. However, in the long run the global community and national communities will depend on tens and thousands of community leaders for continuity and sustenance of peace and justice at smaller levels of the village and urban populations. Therefore, I should go on a little more into details of the role of community educators with examples at family, rural and urban community levels to show the potential they have to bring about change from below.

(Excerpts from the keynote speech delivered by A.T. Ariyaratne at the Third International Conference of the International Community Education Association held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago from July 29th to August 3rd 1991)

I have worked in the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka right from its inception thirty three years ago. Sarvodaya means the awakening of all, and Shramadana means sharing of one's efforts, skills, knowledge and time with others. The objective is to create a no-poverty no-affluence society where every individual, family and the community is awakened to a more contented, peaceful and just life.

It was a team of school teachers and students who initiated this people's movement by organizing study service camps during vacations in most backward village communities of Sri Lanka. They shared their knowledge, labour and skills with village communities while the latter did the same with their guests. Lofty principles of Loving Kindness, Compassionate Action, Altruistic Joy and Equanimity-which were advocated by Lord Buddha to be practised by all who desired to awaken their personality-helped them to live and work together with village people as one family during the camp period. Similarly, the principles of Sharing, Pleasant Language, Constructive Activity and Equality motivated their togetherness to strive for a common ideal.

Besides near miraculous achievements from physical labour such as construction of access roads to villages, school buildings, community centres, village tanks and irrigation canals, wells, sanitary facilities and so on we could observe a tremendous spiritual, psychological and social change taking place within us as well as the village people. Discarded values of a forgotten civilization lost to the modernizers began to give meaning and relevance to a vibrant village community to find solutions to their crying problems. Self-reliance, community participation and community management were found to be more meaningful than dependency on alluring sermons and promises from politicians, plans and handouts from distant bureaucrats and maintenance of law and order by coercive instruments of the state. Individuals, families and rural communities were on the move to play a greater role in designing their own future.

The Sarvodaya experiment

We have interpreted the word "Sarvodaya" which Mahatma Gandhi coined to mean "The Welfare of All" as the "Awakening of All". This is because, according to the Buddhist teachings, the very purpose of human existence is to overcome ignorance about reality and attain enlightenment. Accordingly we rejected long ago the notion of development that had no ultimate purpose beyond that of increasing GNP or the production and consumption of goods and services. The vision we have is one of personality awakening where the development of the individual personality is the goal of society. All our programmes of work are geared to this end and to imparting this vision into the hearts and minds of people so that they may develop their own inner freedom and choices and be led inwardly by love and duty rather than from the outside by rigid laws. Our programmes aim to lead to a true community where they participate as men and women of compassion and open themselves particularly to the poor, the vulnerable and the suffering and thus become partisans of peace.

Governments and communities can produce things, make machinery, textiles or tea, they can build hospitals and factories. However, those things do not necessarily give life to others, in the sense of transmitting new hope and meaning to them so that new energies can flow. Through the Sarvodaya programme of work camps, pre-schools, savings and credit, legal-aid, peace brigades, infrastructure engineering and other activities which have a visible impact in changing the external world, we keep in mind that what we are seeking is the inner transformation of human beings and their upliftment in spiritual terms.

Sarvodaya's activities in a village usually commence with a Shramadana camp. The villagers, which may well consist of different groupings of people divided on the basis of class, caste or party political affiliation, are motivated to organize such gift of labour camps satisfying one or more of their basic human needs as determined by themselves. The camp may dig a new well, build a new road or restore a public building. The important elements in this exercise are self-reliance, community participation and implementation. The

more important goal is not the external construction but the inner consciousness of unity and altruistic joy that is created in the process. We call this psychological infrastructure building.

A series of such shramadana camps is followed by formation of groups such as of children, youth, mothers, farmers and other occupational groups. This social infrastructure building leads to further activities to satisfy basic human needs. For example, preschool children need nutrition, health care and to be socialised. Accordingly, a child development centre may be organized by the mothers group to cater to their needs. Around this centre many activities get organized and they supplement and intensify those programmes.

At present there are almost 6000 young women volunteers in as many villages who implement Sarvodaya's Early Childhood Development Programme at the village level. Self-reliance is the key word, as the children are taught how to make the most of their own environments without becoming dependent on the outside. For instance, the children themselves will identify the different types of green leaves that grow in their neighbourhood with which a nutritious gruel of rice, green leaves and coconut is prepared over a low energy store manufactured with Sarvodaya assistance. The children will be taught that the tree that provided them with the fuel to make their gruel should be replaced, and to this end Sarvodaya has a tree planting programme which includes the fostering of medical herbs. A reverence for the environment is created in the child which as a result leads to environmentally sustainable practices.

Another Sarvodaya innovation is the children's fairs organized under the programme whereby children are provided with a market for their home garden produce. The income they earn from their sales are then deposited in special savings accounts and are released for the purpose of purchasing educational necessities which are often beyond the reach of the poor. In the home gardening activity they learn from their childhood not to use poisonous chemicals and learn rather to do it the natural way.

The adults savings activity in turn links up with another major Sarvodaya programme which is the Rural Enterprise

Programme. This programme is aimed at resolving two of the most basic constraints to small scale economic projects which are the limited access to training in economic management and lack of economic credit. In the same way as the Early Childhood Development Programme was shown to be an integrated one with a series of activities, each building on the other, so is the Rural Enterprises Programme integrated with a host of other economic-related and management-training activities whose goal is to empower and unite village communities to pursue their own development according to their own values without getting entangled in values and projects over which they have no control.

The Legal-Aid programme offers another example of Sarvodaya's endeavour to give back to people control over their own lives while promoting the bonds of community. In all parts of the country, the legal aid programme obtains the voluntary services of lawyers, trained family counsellors, monks, priests, police officers, government officials and other respected persons who mediate and attempt to resolve disputes out of the court room. This service is a great blessing to poor villagers whose experience within the court room is in many ways reminiscent of the situation depicted by Leonard Woolf the former British colonial officer and husband of the famous British novelist Virginia Woolf, who whilst in Sri Lanka in the early 20th century wrote the novel "Village in the Jungle" where he depicted the utter bewilderment and hopelessness of a villager ensured by the majesty of British law conducted in a language he did not understood. Today, whilst a villager might well understand the language, the procedures and manoeuvres remain quite foreign to him as it does to anyone who is not a lawyer, and so the feeling of powerlessness and helplessness inside the cour troom continues. Besides, the cost of engaging a lawyer and the delays experienced in the courts make the resort to the law a prohibitive experience. Consequently, Sarvodaya's legal aid programme is a very popular and beneficial one, where with guidance of voluntary lawyers, disputes are mostly settled outside the courts of law.

These are only a small number of examples from Sarvodaya's multifarious activities which also include relief and rehabilitation in areas of military conflict, community

health services, development education institutes, plantation services, Shanti Sena (or Peace Corps) services, community based rehabilitation of the physically handicapped and drug addicts, orphanages and day care centres, malaria control and women's hand pump manufacturing among many other activities.

All this did not happen overnight. Neither was it smooth nor without serious obstacles. From village money lenders, land holders and blackmarketeers to unscrupulous business magnates, from politically vested interests in the village to national level political power wielders, from conservative traditionalists to western educated "development specialists" and so on, unthinkable ridicule, abuse, sabotage and even physical harassments were received in this thirty three year period of the growth of this people's movement. Ministers of State abused their power and even violated civilized moral laws as well as laws of the country to weaken and destroy this people's non-violent movement. The worst so far is faced today.

In time to come the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement will be cited among others as a text book example for many valuable attempts made by poor and powerless people for Peace and Justice which were thwarted at every stage by rich and powerful people. Poverty and Powerlessness go together as much as Wealth and Power also go together. Poverty can never be eradicated without overcoming powerlessness. 8600 village communities out of a total of 23000 village communities and 4 to 4 1/2 million out of a national population of 16.5 million people have very bitterly learnt this lesson in their struggle to awaken.

In spite of being a non-violent, non-power seeking, constructive people's movement why is Sarvodaya Shramadana facing this harassment and unjust treatment by powerful elements of a government publicly professing to be protectors of democracy and human rights of our people? Should the movement go underground and resort to violence or abandon its non-political constructive work and take to power-politics? We shall do neither. Instead we shall intensify our community education and other related programmes, strengthen and sharpen our non-violent instruments of social change, go

about our work fearlessly in the face of death threats, make any sacrifice without malice to our adversaries and shall strive to make them realize that they were wrong. Coercive instruments of the State is not the answer to the colossal problems our countries are facing. Bringing this realization to the wielders of power and wealth in our nations is a principal task for the community educators.

Two of the tools we have forged at Sarvodaya to oppose those hostile activities are peace marches and peace meditations involving thousands of people drawn from the village communities in which we work. As it was in the case of Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha campaigns truth and non-violence are our chief weapons. The inter relation between those two concepts is that we believe that truth will be not destroyed by the use of violence and there is no force stronger than truth. However, our use of non-violence does not mean in any way a submission to the will of the wrongdoer but it calls for a pitting of one's whole energies against the will of the oppressor. In our peace marches and meditations we strive to gather together a critical mass of spiritual consciousness and by showing our willingness to take risks and suffer in ourselves without retaliating, we hope to awaken the respect and higher truth in our opponent.

Back to the source

This brings us to another dimension of community education. Community education cannot be separated from community enlightenment and community empowerment. These three processes of Education, Enlightenment and Empowerment of rural and urban communities must be encouraged and supported by the centralized state machineries leading not to a kind of devolution of some power but enabling evolution of power from the people. To add to what I said earlier, it may well be this evolutionary process that will be the real answer to the myriad problems modern governments are facing.

Take any national problem the aggregates of which have grown into global proportious: Mass scale poverty, stagnant economies, pollution of air, water, soil and food, desertification, ecological and environmental hazards, violation of human rights and neglect of human duties, hunger and deprivation, civil strife and wars, ever increasing

refugee populations from armed conflicts, malnourishment, infant mortality and morbidity, new dreadful diseases like AIDS, resurgence of old diseases like malaria and cholera, escalation of slums, national debts, increasing numbers of disabled, mass illiteracy and unemployment, child abuse and exploitation of women, drug and alcohol addiction, extinction of indigenous and aboriginal people and increasing suicides and homicides are problems that have eluded any satisfactory solutions from high powered macro-structures. These are mass problems that need a mass participatory approach by the affected people themselves.

Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka, Gandhian movements in India, Folk high schools in Scandinavian countries, Dr. James Yen's Mass Education Movement which flourished into the International Rural Reconstruction Movement, Chipco movement in Himalayan foothills, NAM movement in Burkina Faso, Dian Desai in Indonesia, Voluntary Simplicity Movement in the United States and hundreds of other peoples movements around the world have already blazed a possible new path for global renewal. Even in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, people's development organizations are emerging fast. In these movements and organizations European, Scandinavian and North American governments are finding a new partner in international development co-operation who can effectively reach the poorest and the powerless. The more the societies are democratic there is more scope, recognition and support given to peoples movements and organizations by their governments. This I believe is a good indicator to measure the degree to which our societies are truly democratic.

We often loosely use the word non-governmental organizations for these. But I believe that we have to bring into usage a more positive name like People's Movements for Global Survival and Awakening. The common goal that should bind all of them together globally should be;

> Putting the individual, the family and the community as the foremost objectives and the agents for building a sustainable, peaceful and just society.

Most governments have increasingly assumed the role of exclusive decision makers for people's lives and their environments. This has resulted in people's welfare and development organizations being treated as a nuisance or as intruders by most political leaders and bureaucrats at the time they wield power. Most of the functions of governments pertaining to community life can be performed more effectively and with less costs by self-governing organized community groups within democratic laws. Five decades of so-called planned development led by governments and backed by World Bank and IMF does not present an impressive record in spite of billions of dollars spent compared with the ever increasing billions of poor and powerless people. A single minded approach to hand over the problem and resources to people who are affected seems to me to be the direction in which humanity should proceed.

The key initiators of this change of direction are the community educators. The critical organizations for this task are the people's movements and groups already in place from Alaska to Papua New Guinea. The guiding principles are Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Words, Right Deeds, Right Effort, Right Livelihood, Right Awareness and Right Concentration.

In our country we call this the noble eight-fold path. Peace and Justice well founded in human minds, families and communities can humanize nations, governments and supra-national bodies. It can take us to a twenty-first century where all living beings and nature will find a dynamic and sustainable peace and justice with spirituality, science and technology harmoniously combined for Universal Awakening which we call Vishvodaya.

DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED ADULT EDUCATION AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Heribert Hinzen

A traditional saying handed down in the Mende culture that "education begins in the womb and ends in the tomb", conveys the notion of a human need, a social necessity, and a spiritual continuity. The human capacity for learning as well as the continuous process of social, technological and professional change calls for a disposition to relearn and reconsider. In West African societies, where institutionalized structures like school were first introduced by missionaries and colonizers, did not view life-long learning as a dull sort of chronic schooling or life-long detention.

It is no surprise that in one East African nation, after independence was attained, the educational system was so reorganized as to incorporate traditional cultural values and tried to adapt them to the demands of the future. Slavery and colonization created feelings of inferiority and powerless submission to inhuman living conditions. Education for liberty became an aim to counter undesired and intentional repression and exploitation. Programme statements of the President of Tanzania such as "Life means learning", "Education never ends", and "Adult education refers merely to learning as an adult", testify to the realization that throughout his whole life the individual is confronted with new situations and roles which require him to learn in order to understand and improve his living conditions. Since human development is a life-long process, education and learning should also cover the entire human life span. Only in this way can an individual actively contribute to the shaping of changing social circumstances and, on the national level, help to stimulate overall societal development.

It is precisely the dramatic developments in many African countries over the past years that make it difficult to recognize the concepts and visions in these statements, and to separate them from Utopia and wishful thinking. Still, they are important as a fundamental message before we turn to specific contents, forms and institutions of adult education significant in the modern, informal and in the traditional sectors of Third World countries.

The traditional and informal sector

There is no doubt that in most countries the traditional sector continues to be important and for the broader masses of the population in many cases, it reviews the most important one for production, marketing and services. Farmers, blacksmiths, potters, healers, carpenters as well as religious, social, cultural and political leaders, male and female, all receive systematic training for their functions and roles. The principles, methods and institutional arrangements of those types of training merit closer examination not just to the past but also to their present implications. In every case the principle of {"learning by doing"} can be found. Those acquainted with classroom situations that rely on blackboards, chalk, and books - which for the most part are outdated, if available at all - and, to complete the picture, a frontal style of teaching in an overcrowded classroom, know that this type of learning situation is far from both traditional as well as modern forms of teaching, which aim to stimulate creativity and openness for innovation. Such situations do not lay the groundwork or provide motivation for life-long learning.

It would appear then that for some time to come, and for very many people, the informal sector will seem to be a necessary synthesis of weakened structures in the traditional sector and still weaker structures in the modern sector for almost all areas of production, maintenance, trade and social services. Explicit examples can be found in African, Asian and Latin American cities, on their sidewalks, in their backyards, warehouses and at their open-air food stands. That is where everything can be had or done, specially for the poorer members of the population. The increased ineptitude of the mostly government-run institutions requires people to organize themselves in order to secure their survival. Unfortunately, there are too few studies with verified results on informal sector learning processes, that without exception in one way or another, have a basic or ongoing training character for youth and adults. In this connection it is important that training occurs primarily through non-written forms of communication, and that literacy is not a prerequisite. If reading and writing are still really important for this process they can be added in an adequate and specific manner.

Framework, legislation, organization

Adult education, too, is influenced to a high degree by its surrounding conditions. Everything which, within a given country, goes to promote or hinder it builds up a framework of conditions that can hardly be crossed. This national framework naturally depends on the international scenario. The debt crisis, the low prices of raw materials, and internationally imposed economic development programmes may affect adult education to a lesser degree only because, on the whole they play a rather subordinate role in the thinking and action of responsible government officials.

Only a very few countries of the third world have passed legislation to ensure the promotion of adult education. However their budget allocations, often barely cover a small number of bureaucratic government positions. In the absence of funds for programmes, to a large extent, they are not even able to fulfil their intended planning and control functions. Positive trends certainly can also be noted, particularly if we consider the development of the countries in South East Asia.

In the practical implementation of local adult education programmes, hope lies mainly in the committment of many non-government organizations, private and independent agencies, as well as university institutions. These can be associations or grass-roots organizations, and may differ in size or importance. Their scope of influence can be local, regional or national. They can initiate activities at the community level and, either alone or together with other organizations, gain experiences at a higher level and confront government officials with their demands and offer their professional services.

These adult education institutions have now been grouped organizationally into professional adult education associations on the continental level in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and in Europe. With mutual respect for diversity and unity, these associations support national activities, and, in particular, regional South-South exchange. The fact that the Asian-South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education encompasses non-government organizations,

government agencies and university institutions from such diverse countries as India, China, South Korea, Indonesia, Fiji, Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Australia suffices to show what a complex and complicated undertaking it is.

ASPBAE in Asia and the Pacific

The work of ASPBAE covers a very large and extremely differentiated geographical area that is densely populated, and culturally, as well as politically, diverse and varied. For this reason ASPBAE and its partner organizations do not have a uniform framework of basic conditions within which to organize their activities. Just to cite some of the contrasts here: there is India, with its almost continental dimensions and contradictory history of development; Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea and Thailand, the young, dynamic economic powers ("5 Tigers"); China, with its revolutionary changes over the past decades up to the dramatic events of the year 1989; Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, marked by war and destruction; the many islands which go to form the states of Indonesia and the Philippines, as well as the other countries and groups of islands in the Pacific which constitute sovereign states; and then again there are the industrialized countries or continents of Japan, New Zealand and Australia.

Hinduism as well as the teachings of the Buddha and the Koran, extensive Christianized areas and influential natural religions characterize the people in their values and behaviour patterns.

Different phases of economic and technological development are not only apparent among the states of the region, but also within the individual countries themselves. In many cases societal structures promote a tendency for the rich to become more affluent and the poor to be driven in increasing numbers to even below the subsistence level.

Adult education by itself certainly cannot be the determining factor to alter these contradictory and in many cases even inhuman living conditions or framework. On the other hand we know that adult education cannot function isolated from political and cultural influences.

Changing priorities and perspectives

It would be presumptuous to assume that ASPBAE can address all of these different conditions simultaneously and in like measure. It is rather the nature of the decentralized structure of ASPBAE to respond to local and national initiatives and institutions and support them within the framework of regional agency structures.

A close look at the work of ASPBAE over the past 14 years clearly reveals that its priorities and perspectives are cycling back towards their point of departure. Activities at the outset centred around regionally oriented programmes - conferences, publications, study arrangements, and research. That accentuated a positive direction in facilitating the establishment of a regional adult education association and fostered the many and varied contacts which resulted ultimately in new memberships and cooperation. Then, support of national approaches measures and organizations was stepped up so as to permit the reinforcement and expansion of ASPBAE's work within the individual countries. That phase was made possible only through an extensive decentralization of the responsibilities and administrative structure of ASPBAE while maintaining a high level of communication among the members. Adherence to principles and goals for partners operating in such divergent situations and under such different conditions requires harmonization of conflicting interests and flexible modifications in everyday practice.

It is therefore not surprising for ASPBAE, in its current phase of project planning, to set goals and design once again measures with the accent on its regional character. The cooperation and support of up to a hundred or more separate activities annually in the countries and member organizations is made possible. At the same time it requires a renewed concentration on regional aspects in which individual, local or even national experiences are discussed, general-ized, or even unified on a sub-regional or regional basis. It will often prove to be a balancing act to perceive unity in such diversity and either to leave a local feature as it is or to expand it on the principle of learning from one another.

We may assume that this regional programme has a good chance of succeeding despite a comparatively limited budget. Considering the extent of the region and the number of

potential target groups its potential depends basically on human and material resources existing in each of the respective countries.

International cooperation

These continentally organized professional associations have joined together on a world-wide scale in the International Council for Adult Education. Not only this body, but also UNESCO and other such international organizations addressing culture, science, education and development, support the ongoing improvement and promotion of developmental-oriented approaches to adult education and through their efforts to compare internationally and publicize local and national experiences and concepts connected with them.

The German Adult Education Association (DVV) also belongs to this network. Already in the 1960's, DVV was making a significant contribution by providing various forms of support in programmes for basic and ongoing training of adult educators, in the production of teaching and learning materials, and by taking the initial steps to found a department devoted to adult education in developing countries. These approaches have been systematically built up and are reflected today in co-operative arrangements with all of the regional professional associations, including, of course, ASPBAE for the last 15 years. In addition, there are bilateral adult education projects ranging from basic education to diploma courses at university level, as well as projects promoting research and evaluation, and above all urban and rural forms of adult education, which are income and production-oriented and adopt a self-help approach. Lastly, the DVV journal **Adult Education and Development,** a publication with a wide international distribution in three major languages (English, French and Spanish), was conceived and published as an instrument to promote the exchange of information and to promote a dialogue on theory and practice. The Department of International Cooperation has the other function of linking the experiences gleaned from international adult education efforts and cooperation in the area of development into the educational programmes conducted by German community educational centres (the Volkshochschulen) , which include those in the new Federal States, by offering further education, pedagogical assistance and materials for their personnel, instructors and participants. The Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and the Foreign Office have

supported the international component in the work of DVV to an ever increasing degree.

Adult education on its own is not capable of solving the world's crises. On the other hand, without the life-long disposition to learn in informal and formal educational settings, people-and this refers particularly to adults-will not be in a position to comprehend, reflect upon, and modify the permanently changing conditions and situations both in their local and global contexts. This is the challenge of adult education everywhere, in the developing regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as in industrialized countries. There must be solidarity both in word and deed. Otherwise, the idea of the "one world" will be a pretence or an alibi.

GOVERNMENT-NGO RELATIONS : FOCUS ON THE PHILIPPINES

Horacio "Boy" Morales Jr.

DEVELOPMENT is a complex process that requires a dynamic interplay of both public and private sectors. Government, by virtue of its command of most resources, is expected to take the lead role. In this context, non-government organizations (NGOs) perform a supportive function.

In most countries of the South, however, underdevelopment has clearly manifested government's failure to lead in the development process. This has led to the redefinition of the terms of reference of the relationship between government and NGOs. Politics, or the question of control over resources and decision-making processes, has now become the central theme governing these relations. This is also the reason why development and democratization have become the central themes of NGO development efforts.

Through the years, governments have been under constant pressure in the face of reformist and revolutionary challenges. Their choices were either to retard, or to push forward the development process. However, political repression has been a typical response in most Third World countries even as way back in the late 50s. In some cases, like in South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, development was ushered in at the expense of democratization. In others, the downfall of regimes and the emergence of populist governments led to a more pluralist set-up.

GO-NGO relations are shaped by these changing contexts. That is why they are, at differing times and situations, complementary or conflict-ridden, or even confrontational. Underlying this relationship is consensus, or the absence of it, around a development path within and between these two actors, particularly at the national level.

(Presented at the Consultation Conference on GO-NGO Relations, sponsored by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia and the International Council for Adult Education (PRIA-ICAE), New Delhi, March 1989, with Isagani Serrano. Reprinted with permission from **A Call for People's Development** edited by Cesar Cala and Jo Dongail, National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1990)

Notwithstanding the changing contexts, my basic position as an NGO leader is this: Development is too big a question to be left to government alone to answer. Government must lead, but failing in this, it should at least provide a supportive national system, a sympathetic climate for development to take place. NGOs, on the other hand, must be autonomous at all times even as they continue to define modes of interaction with government toward the promotion of sustainable development and people's empowerment. And where government fails to lead, NGOs must take on the added challenge and responsibility of, not only influencing government policy but more so, advocating and evolving alternative development strategies and programs.

Models of GO-NGO relations: from harmony to conflict

The story of GO-NGO relations in the Philippines can best be described as having undergone an incremental shift from complementation to confrontation. Harmony characterized this relationship in the mid-50s following the defeat of the communist rebellion. This lasted up to the mid-60s, when clamor for reforms began to reemerge. Midway through the Marcos years, revolutionary activities gathered momentum, and later on galvanized popular actions into a national movement that eventually put an end to the Marcos era.

Before the 50s, private voluntary initiatives would hardly ring a bell in the Philippines. The establishment of the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), and later on, of other voluntary organizations, particularly those which were church-initiated, was significant because it began to highlight the important role of NGOs in the development process.

In their own ways, these NGOs demonstrated distinct approaches to development that were characterized as grassroots-oriented and cost-efficient. Indirectly, they also constituted a challenge to government through the exposure of the defects of its national delivery systems. But because these types of NGOs ignored the question of power-relations, they got stuck to just performing gap-filling roles, whether at the national or at the local levels. They were, therefore, treated by government as welcome partners in development.

Meanwhile, government continued to fail in its declared mission to alleviate poverty. The classic command approach that is the mark of the Keynesian tradition failed to deliver the goods, so to speak. Development benefits never trickled down to the poverty groups that needed them most. What the country saw was some growth in the GNP on account of massive infusion of external finance, on the one hand, and the continuing depredations of the urban and rural under classes, on the other.

The solution to this development paradox became more elusive as the country got saddled with more foreign debt. The human and social costs became more appalling. Real wages dropped even as prices continued on an upward spiral. Landlessness and rural-urban migration worsened the unemployment problem. Social services came to the verge of collapse.

The development crisis led to a widening opposition. NGOs and popular groups which, otherwise, would have remained as mere localized initiatives became more receptive to progressive calls. The financial crisis of 1983 exacerbated the problem even more, thereby, lending more credence to the radical alternative.

As the poverty crisis deepened and popular resistance against it heightened, government responded with increasing repression. On the other hand, NGO initiatives focused more on strengthening popular resistance through consciousness-raising, organizing and mobilizing activities. In short, development work became highly politicized.

Under these circumstances, GO-NGO relations became more and more confrontational. The failure of government to lead the development process pushed NGOs to the alternative path. The challenge was directed, not only to the dysfunctional aspects of the system but, to the whole system itself.

How the story ended has been many times told and need not be dealt with here. What is important is the sequel under the new government that emerged after Marcos.

A continuing saga of development crisis

GO-NGO relations under the present set-up must be viewed within the framework of a continuing development crisis. The

interim period from February 1986 to early 1987 may as well be considered a missed opportunity, on the part of government, for harmonious GO-NGO cooperation.

For theoretical purposes, we can outline what was missed by the new government during this period. For one thing, it could have chosen to play an activist role, proceeding head on with the elimination of the structural obstacles to development. Assuming it had chosen to side with the popular movement, it could have declared a unilateral moratorium on debt repayment, issued an agrarian reform decree that would effect real land redistribution, and curtailed the power of the politicized military.

If such were politically untenable, the Aquino government could have, at least, defined the contours of the development process in ways that clearly spelled out its declared pro-people inclination. But even this did not happen. At best, this was only communicated in very ambiguous terms.

From all indications, the government has completely turned conservative. The new agrarian reform law that came out after more than a year of tedious deliberations, is biased in favor of the land-owning and agro-business sectors, at the expense of tenants and landless peasants. Labor policies are biased against progressive trade unions and are designed primarily to encourage the massive involvement of foreign investments into the same export-oriented, foreign debt-driven economic development program.

The government promises full economic recovery and a continuous process of democratization. Reality and current indicators speak differently. The biggest chunk of the national budget is eaten up by debt servicing and military expenditures, altogether amounting to two-thirds of total expenditures. Very little money is allocated for social services and development.

Philippine NGOs are currently undergoing a serious reexamination of their position toward government. At the very least, they are all critical of some government policies. What is more important though, is the emergence of new process of consensus-building around a comprehensive alternative development agenda.

As a response to the unresolved agrarian question, a strong pressure and alternative body, the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR) was formed in mid-87. This is a broad coalition of 12 national peasant organizations and several

NGOs. Although it started as a lobby and pressure group for a pro-peasant agrarian reform law, this coalition has been transformed into an opposition force pursuing an alternative People's Agrarian Reform Code (PARCODE).

The Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) is another formation of NGOs and popular groups that advocates an alternative to the official policy on debt management. It has laid out its proposals for a debt repayment moratorium, a ceiling on debt service and selective repudiation of foreign debt accountabilities.

There are several other alternative formations addressing sectoral and comprehensive development issues. Sector-based formations like the People's Council on Rural Savings and Finance (PCRSF), address components of the interdependent rural system. Coalitions around larger issues focus more on advocacy for comprehensive systemic change.

In the face of these challenges, official response has at best, been ambivalent. But what is most worrisome are efforts of the military and various quarters of the civilian government to lump all these initiatives as organic components of the underground opposition, instead of treating them as forms of organized articulation of the demands of the marginalized sectors.

Already, the government is mapping out a strategy to deal with NGOs.

Legislative measures are now up for deliberations. At face value, House Bills 745, 747 and 2145 declare their intention to enhance the role of independent people's organizations and to guarantee the rights of NGOs. However, a closer look at their provisions shows that they actually compromise NGO autonomy and relegate them to performing adjunct roles to government in implementing programs in line with official development policy. Another bill endorses outrightly an investigation of NGO fund utilization, invoking charges made by the military that NGOs are financial conduits of the underground armed opposition.

External assistance to NGOs, though still negligible relative to bilateral and multilateral development assistance , is now being subjected to tight scrutiny. Official development assistance (ODA) is also being utilized to divide the NGO community, even as substantial amounts find their way into pseudo-NGOs directly involved in counter insurgency.

During the past few months, consultations with NGOs have been called by government line agencies in an effort to attract their participation in official programs. Apparently, this is also in response to pressures from many donor countries in the West to require NGO participation in government programs they support. It is worrisome that invitations to these consultations were selective and excluded a critical section of the NGO community. Political observers have noted that this can very well be part of an overall effort to marginalize these progressive sections.

Trends and challenges

Like most debt-burdened countries of the Third World, the Philippines suffers a net outflow of resources, worsened by a decline in development assistance. Thus, government becomes less and less able to deliver its promises, gets more defensive in the face of popular pressures and resorts more and more to repressive measures.

The continuing failure of official development policy will again put government into a collision course with NGOs and popular groups advocating alternatives. This will effect the polarization of the situation, thereby, politicizing the development process once again.

The demand for development cooperation cannot be over-emphasized. But for such cooperation to take place, basic policy changes need to be made. This burden rests primarily on government.

The mood and rethinking process within development circles favor the NGO position. The model of development prescribed by the developed countries for countries like the Philippines, cannot continue. A model that results in the further marginalization of the poor majority and destruction of the already depleted environmental resources, cannot be sustained.

The 1987 London Conference of Southern NGOs has articulated this message very sharply. The poor must be empowered to acquire the control of resources that make for development and to gain full autonomy to decide what model is most appropriate for themselves.

It is in the best interest of national development that government heeds such messages.

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT : CAUSE FOR CONCERN IN THE LAO PDR

Somsak J.

"The times they are a changin'."

Bob Dylan sang it.
The author saw it - in Laos.

Introduction

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is in transformation. Look at this key indicator. Two years ago, one could cross any of Vientiane's major streets blindfolded with less than a 2% chance of making contact with any vehicle other than a bicycle. In June of 1991, I normally had to wait 30 seconds to 1 1/2 minutes for a break in the [motorized] traffic on these same roadways.

This is what many people refer to as development.

Laos is a country with a difficult past. Prior to 1975, it was a country ruled, demarcated, controlled, bombed and otherwise subjected to the whims of a succession of foreign powers for nearly 100 years. At the approximate end of the Vietnam war, there was a "revolution", one which had been gaining momentum for 30 years, and the former government was replaced by a socialist one.

General statistics

Today, Laos is a country with increasingly conflicting patterns and contradictory statistics*. Here are some of the best estimates of the latter [courtesy of UNDP]:

- Land area of 236,800 sq. km. [slightly smaller than the United Kingdom or Oregon].

- Population of about 4.1 million [about the same as in Ho Chi Minh City]; a bit more than 17 persons for each sq. km.

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*While statistics in Laos vary widely depending on the source and few are accurate, they can serve as indicators of the situation.

- Gross Domestic Product of U.S.$308 million in 1989 [far less than one half the cost of a new stealth bomber].
- Government revenues of $57.6 million [18.7% of GDP] in 1989, mainly from electricity and timber.
- Annual per capita income of $180 in 1989.
- Infant mortality of 117 per 1,000 births and one doctor per 12,600 population outside of Vientiane.

Education

Today, Laos is a socialist country cautiously edging forward to capitalism. Why? Well, look at the figures above. And look at the one facet of life which could have the greatest impact on the future-education. It is not working. In a moment we'll look at some more figures. But first, impressions.

In Vientiane, Savannakhet, Luang Prabang and a few other cities, there are lots of students, neatly uniformed and in their schools. They are studying either 5 years at the primary, 3 years at the lower secondary, or 3 years at the upper secondary level. They are not studying at the university level, because there is no university. They are planning for one.

This is not the case in the rural areas. There the school building itself is constructed of bamboo and thatch. There the teacher may have finished the 5th grade or may be the 10th. The teacher may or may not receive her/his $10-20 salary every month. And, he/she may or may not be in the classroom. This may also be the case for the children, whose presence in the low yielding rice fields is more essential. The school has few books. And most of those are about subjects which do not directly relate to their lives.

No wonder you find statistics like the following:

- 66% of school aged children enrolled in primary school
- 1st to 5th grade survival rate of 33%
- 40% of students repeating the 1st grade
- An average of 13.5 student-years to produce each 5th grade graduate
- 35% of all teachers professionally unqualified
- 5% of the teacher training curriculum devoted to teacher training; the rest being standard secondary education.

Ethnic diversity

But what can you do when government revenue is but 57% of government expenditures? And expenditure for education amounts to a mere 3.8-4.0% of Gross Domestic Product - $12 million per year, i.e. the cost of 12.3 bowls of noodles for each child 16 or under. Bodies alone require more than that to function properly, let alone minds. Well, I guess it could be worse. In fact, it is worse - for the ethnic minorities, which comprise so much of the nation's total population, particularly the remotely located highland groups, the Lao Soung. Look at these figures:

- Highland tribes comprise 10% of the Lao population, but only 4% of primary school students; and a slight 0.6% at the secondary level.
- A province like Louang Namtha, which is only 1% ethnic Lao, has between 10% and 18% of its children in school.
- In Louang Namtha the 5th grade population is approximately 3% of the 1st grade population.
- In mountainous areas, the average number of student-years to produce a 5th grade graduate rises to 21.8.

This is even more serious in that the ethnic minority population of the Lao PDR may be 40% or 50% of the total population. The latest figures [1984-85 census] of the Institute of Ethnology on the 47 ethnic groups in the country are:

Lao	1,804,101	50.51% [of the total]
Phu Thai	441,497	12.36%
Khammu	389,694	10.91%
Hmong	231.168	6.47%
Lue	102,760	2.88%
Katang	72,391	2.03%
Makoung	70,382	1.97%
Akha	58,500	1.64%
30 others	401,123	11.23%
Total	3,571,616	

By language groups, figures are:

Lao-Thai	2,387,504	[6 groups]	66.84%
Mon-Khmer	827,773	[31 groups]	23.18%
Hmong-Yao	249,259	[2 groups]	6.98%
Tibeto-Burmese	100,898	[7 groups]	2.82%
Haw [Chinese]	6,361	[1 group]	0.18%

(The figures in these two tables do not add up; that's the way the figures are in Laos)

It is quite understandable that high levels of access to education are difficult to achieve, not to mention the lack of sufficient teachers and materials and curricula relevant to such disparate needs and conditions. Estimates of adult illiteracy levels of 43% and even 56% are, thus, quite credible. Especially when the Department of Adult Education & Literacy has a staff of 7 and an annual operational budget of around $1,400.

A tentative conclusion

All in all, if you review the statistics and observe the realities [as I did in 5 of 17 provinces], you come to a rather inescapable conclusion. While there is a fair amount of schooling in the Lao PDR, there is far less education. Witness the blackboards in secondary and teacher training schools covered with chemistry formulas, algebra equations and logarithms [which are difficult to relate to anyone's rural needs]. Witness the agriculture school without a single tree planted on the grounds. Witness the children who can read from the texts [when they have them] but cannot plant a kitchen garden.

At the same time, it is amazing that Laos, which does not have the financial means to support an educational system, is able to provide even these limited opportunities for 66% of the school aged children. It is unfortunate, however, that this very strong commitment did not allow the nation to break away from the largely irrelevant western bias of education for selection [e.g. algebra over agriculture] rather than education for life.

The Lao government, to its credit, is quite aware of this. The newly elected President, Kaysone Phoumvihane, said so in the recent Vth Party Congress:

> The quality of education was low. The number of drop-outs and children enlisted for primary schools but could not attend school has increased, especially in rural areas.
>
> We can say that the implementation of the social policy is still our weakest point and our most difficult problem at present.

National development

President Kaysone has called for renewed efforts at educational reform throughout the country, because the Party is "Deeply aware of the importance of education in national development." Which takes us back to crossing the road in

Vientiane. A considerable portion of the motorized vehicle traffic keeping you from getting to the other side of the street is "development vehicles".

In fact, the international developers now comprise a significant ethnic minority themselves, certainly more than the 842 Lolo in 41st place in the ethnology rankings. This fact itself is a subject of concern. And not just in terms of the Thai and Japanese businessmen intent on buying up the forests for lumber exports. And not just because of the inherent corrupting influences of sudden and vast influxes of international development funds. Figures indicate this trend [courtesy of UNDP again].

External development assistance is up from U.S. $47 million in 1981 to U.S.$162 million in 1989 and, despite the decline in assistance from the USSR and Eastern bloc nations, is on the rise. In 1989, aid from Vietnam, the USSR, the GDR and Hungary [in non-convertible currency] amounted to 23% of the total. The remaining 77% [in convertible currencies] came mainly from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, Japan, and Sweden [with 45% in loans]. The breakdown by sector was as follows:

Agriculture, forestry	$31,231 million	19.2%
Economic management	30,763	19.0%
Transport & communications	30,098	18.6%
Human resources development	24,614	15.2%
Natural resources, energy	22.827	14.1%
Humanitarian	12,687	7.8%
Social development	1,876	1.1%
Other areas	7,851	5.0%

Educational development

With a little interpretation, these numbers give an idea of the importance of education to foreign donors. Although education is not identified as a specific area of assistance, it must fall under "human resources development" and/or "social development". The vast majority of human resources development involves study in foreign countries [particularly in the non-convertible area] and technical training, which is not the education of the masses. This leaves a small per cent for education.

It appears that educational development has not been a high donor priority on their support list. More recently, however, the perspective has changed. Let us look at what is about to happen and the role of the ethnic development minority which we noted earlier as a subject of concern.

Even at the risk of overgeneralization, let me generalize. There are currently two major schools of thought with respect to the best approach to donor assisted educational development in Laos.

School #1: The development of education in the Lao PDR is best achieved through the establishment of new structures, systems and administrative procedures, accompanied by the upgrading of personnel, equipment, materials and facilities. This process must commence at the national level and set single national standards for the "delivery" of all education [and, therefore, development] to the people.

This concept is based on the assumption that only a fully developed national education system, meeting criteria similar to those employed by the more economically developed countries, can provide for effective education at all levels. It is subscribed to by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [IBRD] and the Asian Development Bank [ADB] and apparently seconded by most ranking education officials. This orientation is very likely to become fact and guide the vast majority of educational reform actions with the signing and implementation of the World Bank and ADB loan projects in 1992. The total financial assistance [most of which is loan credits] proposed over a period of 5 years for these two projects is approximately U.S.$50 million; IBRD $35 million and ADB $15 million.
(Excerpted from the June 1991 consultant report prepared for UNDP/Laos - "Educationally Disadvantaged in Laos".)

School #2: The development of education in the Lao PDR is best achieved through the ground level design and testing of education-cum-development approaches appropriate to the wide diversity of the Lao population, which then become institutionalized into a gradually improving and expanding system of education conforming to the Lao identity. This process must commence at the lowest levels both in order to meet serious community needs and formulate models which are consistent with the life of the people.

This concept is based on the assumption that lasting and effective development of the individual and the nation must be founded in education relevant to needs of individuals and communities. It is subscribed to by a minority of ranking education officials as well as Unicef, Unesco and a variety of local non-government organizations [e.g. Ecoles Sans Frontieres, Quaker Service Laos, Norwegian Church Aid, Mennonite Central Committee] which are providing financial and other assistance in support of such education. It also appears likely that UNDP will soon support this concept. The

total proposed assistance over a period 5 years is less than U.S.$5 million.

There are definite advantages and disadvantages in both approaches. But considering the financial scale of the proposed $35 million World Bank project, it is worthwhile to review it in brief. There are a total of six sub-projects, as follows:

[1] Restructure the Ministry of Education and Sports and draft a new Education Act.
[2] Rehabilitate, furnish and equip schools in 7 provinces.
[3] Develop new curricula for primary and secondary schools.
[4] Establish an Educational Management Information System.
[5] Revitalize nonformal adult education.
[6] Contribute to the establishment of a Project Implementation Unit in the Ministry.

The overall budget breakdown is also of interest: School construction [42%]; Foreign experts [10%]; Training [10%]; and nothing else more than 3%, except for Miscellaneous and Inflation.

Causes for concern

There are already a number of causes for concern with respect to the rapid reformation of education in this, one of the ten poorest countries in the world. But both the nature and content of the IBRD and ADB education loan projects raise new concerns.

1. Can the Lao PDR efficiently utilize an additional $50 million [nearly doubling the present education budget] in a five year period?

2. Can the Lao economy deal with loan repayment on this level?

3. Are schools, rather than education, what is most needed?

4. In order to serve community subsistence and development needs and respond to local conditions, should educational reforms not begin at the village level?

5. Is a western formulated model for education, overseen by foreign advisors, likely to preserve Lao culture and traditions?

6. Can centrally devised curricula respond to ethnic diversity?

7. Should a foreign entity be the one to propose restructuring of an entire ministry? And the drafting of a new education act?

These are questions that continue to haunt the author and could just as easily haunt coming generations of Lao as well. Although the loan can be repaid in 30-40 years, radical western-biased changes in the Lao people may be irreversible.

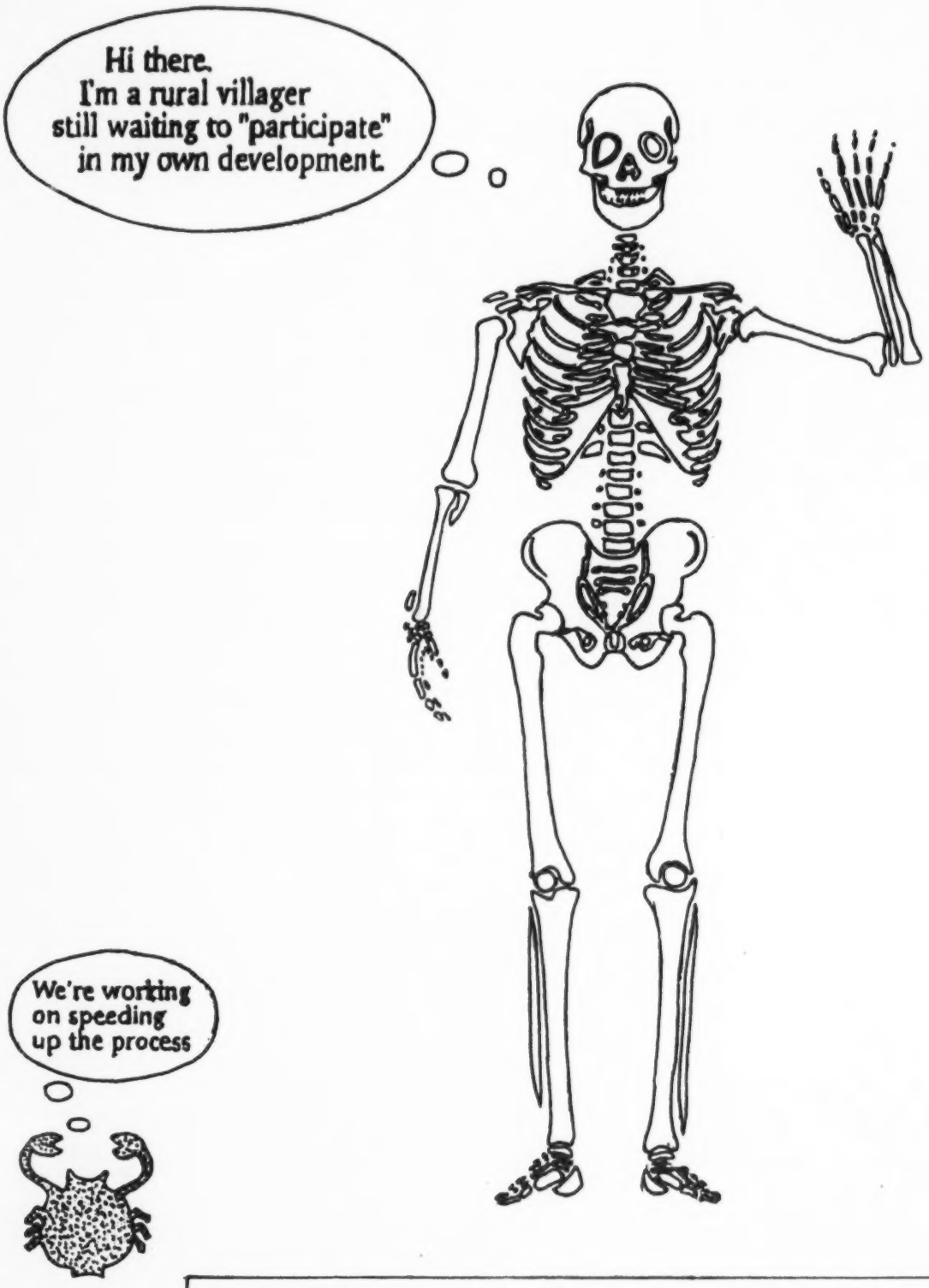
Hindsight and foresight

Education is a long term process. It is not a product. It demands the ability for rear view vision, historical analysis. It demands skill in looking ahead, matching ideals with resources. It demands both of these, but more importantly it requires the determination to make a hard decision today and learn by what you do tomorrow. It requires a decision that only a nation's people should make, for it is they who will have to live with it, for a long time to come.

So . . .

. . . if we look back 20 and more years, what do we see? Foreign powers and uneducated people and, therefore, bombs.

. . . if we look ahead another 20 or more years, what do we see? Economic powers and "people in schools" and, therefore, [time] bombs?



Great Moments in Development History

OLD VALUES AND NEW PARADIGM IN ADULT EDUCATION

Chris Duke

The coming of age of access

1989 I consider was the Year of Access (as well as of miracles in Europe's East) and 1990 bids fair to become the Decade of Access into Britsh higher education, the Access movement, which is rapidly becoming a major alternative route into higher education. It is being gently orchestrated, along with heavy efforts to sustain "lightness of touch", in the CNAA's national Access nerve centre, the Access Courses Recognition Group (ACRG). My purpose was to point out how the traditional concern in the adult education movement to enable those who missed out on educational opportunity first time round has now been taken up in a quite major way among the big players throughout further and higher education. It is no longer a matter mainly for the excluded and impecunious but dedicated workers in the outer zones of adult education.

This is not to say that social and educational inequality, and the other disadvantages associated with gender, ethnicity and handicap as well as class, will now simply go away. Access courses will barely scratch the surface of need, which has to be addressed within the schools, and of course much more widely and fundamentally throughout society. But it would be cynical to dismiss the interest throughout further and higher education with access, and equity, as being merely survivalism in the face of the new demography, in which fewer eighteen-year-olds are coming out of the fifth and sixth forms as cannon fodder for further and higher education. The polytechnics in their continuing education work have taken substantial steps to facilitate and widen access. Many of those who teach on Access courses especially in further education belong to just the same liberal, humanitarian value system which characterises much of the Great Tradition in adult education.

(Excerpts from the Mabel Tylecote Lecture delivered by Prof. Chris Duke at the City College of Community Education, All Saints, Manchester on 2nd March 1990.)

The point is not that the battle is won, but that it is not especially adult education's battle any longer; and it cannot really be won just by concentrating on the educational needs and opportunities of adults either. There are now quite big batallions massing at the opportunity and second chance end of the trenches, but precious few to be found at the social change end - the other aspect of the traditional values and preoccupations that have earned for adult education the label "movement".

Adult education and the common good

On the Access front, the message is essentially one of good cheer. At least the message has got through and greater individual educational opportunity - albeit couched as a waste of human resources for economic growth - has become a public and political priority. For adult educators the difficulty is in coming to terms with this new situation; in getting to work effectively with these new allies, some from quite different backgrounds; and especially in coming to see where this leaves adult education if it is anything more than a "needs-meeting", consumer-satisfying, social, or even simply commercial, service. Is it indeed more? Can it and should it be more?

Can we, as I suggested in taking the title "old values and a new paradigm", see our way to adult education translating its historic mission into the world of the nineties and beyond?

New world, new vision?

What does that world look like? Do we share a vision for it? Do we share a perception of it? Did 1989 mark the end of Europe's Seventy-Five Year War? Does 1990 mark the end of the war of white on black in South Africa? Will the 1990 Russian Revolution sustain or abort? With what result, which ever it is? There are many uncertainties here, as well as greater ground for hope, a greater sense of the rebirth of visionary human will, than I at any rate can remember since 1945 - for even the sixties - visionary, naive, frothy, and too innocent - played and cowered beneath the shadow of the Bomb.

1989 was the Year of the Environment, as well as of Access and of Eastern Europe. Will 1990 be the Decade of the Environment universally, as well as of Access locally? Are these seen as equally relevant to adult education? Are the rain forest, the ozone layer, acid rain and nuclear power, estuary barrages and wind power, the greening of Britain and Europe or "the end of nature", as one recent book described it, really our business as professionals or - "merely" - as citizens? Is the hypocrisy of a Government which preaches Green yet pollutes at home and prevaricates in Britain really a subject for our classes? We could add to this the other items on the broad agenda of political economy to do with greater inequality between rich and poor; the various manifestations of neocolonialism and exploitation beyond as well as within our shores (by us as voters in an elective democracy); the inescapable manifestations of public squalor, run-down and neglect alongside private affluence.

Dreams and visions: any of our business?

I mention these merely to make clear that there is plenty to engage the active citizen if we seek a "relevant" adult education - at macro and micro level, thinking globally, acting locally. I have picked out the environmental crisis because I consider it to be of an order different from all the others; and because it raises issues of a moral, ethical, philosophical and indeed theological kind. It also poses the question, for me, whether what we nowadays call adult education, of the formal, paid and paying, subsidized and recorded kind, can actually address the really important issues of our time.

It is becoming increasingly obvious, not just to Greenpeace activists and way-out deep ecologists but also to the ordinary Guardian, and even Mail, reader, that homo sapiens (masculine form!) is a species out of control. Unlike lemmings there is no handy cliff to sweep over; no massing of birds of prey to thin us out. The conquest of nature is rapidly becoming its destruction, and questions of the preservation of the environment, even in a minimalist and colourless, nature-free sense, are becoming clear and not too distant. Theology comes in terms of our prevailingly anthropocentric religion(s) at least in the West. It seems that Marxism is dying, while the nature and future of

Christianity particularly in the West, as distinct from the East or the South, is unclear. The idea of custodianship scarcely features. Economic growth remains as a national driving force, while new nationalisms rear their heads to threaten.

Your sketch of the world entering the nineties will likely differ in some details from mine. What few could deny, as they watch Gorbachev and Kohl, De Klerk and Mandela, is that the world we thought we knew is undergoing tectonic grinding and shifting. Can formal adult education, with its time-worn memories of a "great tradition", come to grips with these collective and momentous changes, prospects and implied responsibilities? Or is our individualistic ethic now too strong, and our dependency on and accountability to the public exchequer, with its registers and its other, more modern, performance measures, too deep-rooted to dig out?

People power

If so, this does not mark the end of movement-based adult education. May be the individualistic and achieving ethic of new opportunities via the return-to-learn and Access clutch of initiatives will give an inspirational, but essentially individualistic, sharp edge to formal, public adult education - that adult education in which registers record contracts between usually paying students and usually paid teachers, usually in explicitly educational settings.

Movement-based adult education will in this event reside with the people's movements, which are inherently and often massively educative in nonformal ways. The women's movement, the green and the peace movement - and also animal liberation, Islamic and Christian fundamentalism - exemplify the inescapably political character of many mass movements, not all of which all of us may like. These have innately educative, as well as sometimes doctrinaire and indoctrinating, force. Each of these movements embodies a vision and a set of values and purposes for making the world a better place. Each mounts a repertoire of means to educate and persuade, sometimes to intimidate and coerce, present and prospective movement members into some kind of civic action to bring about this better future.

Educational resources and learning

Is it enough to say that adult education, alias the will to learn, create and recreate, will always survive? A sense of optimism and of celebration has swept through our global village as the torch is handed on through Eastern Europe and now to South Africa. But it would be complacent indeed to absolve the more formal adult education enterprise of responsibility for contributing to these large and central issues; to say that it is but a service and need have no sense of movement. May be we can reinstate the term "vocation" at least on our own behalf, by restating the connectedness of formal adult education with its society, and with that society's destiny. The fact is that "education", as distinct from "learning", refers to a quite massive resource <u>for</u> human learning. If we abandon education, or adult education, and talk only of adults' learning, the effect is to leave this substantial resource as the tool or plaything of the haves -those already educationally, socially ad politically equipped and empowered.

We need not pretend that education, sociology's dependent variable, will alone transform and remake our fragmented, atomised, and essentially purposeless, society. However, unless we wish to join the sinister, fundamentally anarchic, ranks of those who hold that society does not exist, we are left with the opportunity and I think the vocation, of trying to hold open the doors of formal, register - and audit-bound, adult education, to serve as one vehicle of "people's power" as well as being a means for individual self-development and advancement. If we can hold on to the collective strand within the old values, while celebrating and accelerating the rise of Access, we may yet see emerging a new paradigm for a 21st century adult education service that does truly serve society.

ELIMINATION OF ILLITERACY IN CHINA BY THE YEAR 2000

Guan Shixiong

China is a large country with a population of 1.1 billion. As early as the 40s when China had a population of only 400 million, the leaders had realized that "it is one of the important tasks in constructing New China to wipe out illiteracy from 80 percent of the population." After the founding of New China in 1949, the major task of leisure time education for workers and farmers has been focused on eradicating illiteracy among workers and farmers. During the first years after the founding of New China, more than 80 percent of the illiterate people among workers and farmers were young and middle-aged. The state attached great importance to this issue and organized people's congresses at all levels, from national to provincial and municipal, to discuss ways to eliminate illiteracy. Then a decision was made to mobilize the working people for a mighty movement of freeing themselves from illiteracy. After massive and repeated literacy campaigns, by the mid 1960s, illiteracy had been basically eradicated among the young and the middle-aged in many regions. Many of the illiterates studied courses in primary or secondary schools, some even went to universities, thus realizing the desire of the working people to free themselves from illiteracy.

But unfortunately, the Great Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) began. Under the influence of the idea study was useless, many young people dropped out from schools. The number of illiterate and semi-illiterate people rose. According to statistics for the year 1980, the number of illiterate young and middle-aged people in Beijing rose again to 240 thousand, which greatly disturbed the leaders and people from all walks of life. Under the consistent instruction and guidance of the State Council, Beijing restarted its literacy program from 1980 to 1990. During the 10 years, many illiterates became literate, and the nine-year compulsory education was also enforced, thus preventing the emergence of a new illiterate group. It was predicted that during the two years from 1990 to 1991, Beijing will basically wipe out illiteracy in response to the call of the International Literacy Year. Presently, the remaining illiterate young and middle-aged people are about 10 thousand in Beijing. Most of them live

in the mountainous area and there are more women than men illiterates. It is undoubtedly much more difficult to educate those so-called "core of illiterate" and "hard bones". We have entered a difficult period. Nevertheless we have the determination to eradicate illiteracy completely as early as possible.

Lessons from experience

Reviewing the forty-year's work of eradicating illiteracy, we can summarize the findings as follows:

1. The key in eradicating illiteracy is to improve the levels of understanding of illiteracy by leaders at different levels.

Illiteracy is one of the biggest social problems at the present time. Its origin and development pose a great challenge to the international society besides being a hindrance to the improvement of national quality. People often say that "it is difficult to wipe out illiteracy and truly it is, but with the attention of the leaders it is never difficult." The initiative in eliminating illiteracy lies mainly with gaining the attention of the leaders on this issue and proper administration at all levels. In the past 10 years, provinces, cities, districts, counties and prefectures with the idea removing illiteracy listed the literacy rate as one item in the Term Responsibility Targets of government leaders at all levels. Literacy rate has also been considered as one of the indicators of their work during the evaluation process. All these contribute to the smooth forward movement of their work.

2. It is useful to the successful completion of the work to launch a massive literacy movement and to create a good atmosphere of learning.

It is an immense and arduous task to wipe out illiteracy in a country with many illiterates. It is impossible to complete this work through school education only. The key is to mobilize the masses ideologically, to awaken illiterate people's self-consciousness and initiative and to make the masses to teach themselves; thus realizing the idea of "the capable being the teachers" and "the masses teaching the

masses". Modern teaching facilities such as broadcasting, TV networks, recordings, videos and newspapers can also be used to publicize educational programs and to conduct various kinds of teaching activities.

3. By carrying out the policy of "blocking, eliminating and consolidating", we can effectively stop the emergence of the new illiterate.

To wipe out illiteracy among the young and the middle-aged, we have to enforce the nine-year compulsory education and consolidate the admission rate of the school aged children to more than 99 percent so as to end the emergence of the new and juvenile illiterate. On the other hand, we have to sponsor different activities to make those who have become literate to read books and newspapers in order to consolidate the achievements of the literacy campaign and to prevent those who have become literate from returning to the state of illiteracy again. Among the 291 towns in Beijing, 180 have set up their own adult schools. The purpose is to realize the concept of adult schools in every township to widely sponsor continuous education and adult basic education for those who have become literate. In recent years, the State Science and Technology Commission formulated a Spark Program and the State Education Commission formulated a Prairie Ablaze Program. The purpose of the two programs is to carry out rural education in a larger area. According to the targets of administration of the two programs, farmers are trained at the rural grassroot level by stages and groups so that the two programs can serve local economic construction and enhance rural economic development.

International and regional cooperation

The 24th Congress of UNESCO pointed out that in the world there are 884 million illiterates who are above 15 years in age, comprising 27.7 percent of the total population. 98 percent of the illiterate are from the developing countries. There are 600 million illiterates in Asia, 162 million in Africa and 44 million in Latin America and the Caribbean Regions. According to the population census in China, there are now 180 million illiterates, including the juvenile, the young, the adult and the aged. Besides, there are another 100 million 6-11 years old children in the developing countries

who are unable to go to schools. If we add this number to the number of illiterates in the world, there are altogether more than one billion illiterates in the world.

In the developed countries, besides the millions of illiterates and semi-illiterates, there are many functional illiterates, i.e. their knowledge cannot satisfy the need to cope with the complicated society and their reading and writing ability is insufficient to enable them to participate normally in social life. In developing countries, the number of functional illiterates cannot even be estimated. Facing such a large and arduous task of eradicating illiteracy, all countries around the world including countries in the Asian and Pacific Region should strengthen their regional and international cooperation, communicate with and support each other, and move together to strive for the target of basically eliminating illiteracy around the world by the year 2000.

In the work of eliminating illiteracy, all countries and nations in the Asian and Pacific Region have their own successful experiences and excellent traditions. For many years, the Asian and South-Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, by communicating with its members, organizing exchanges and inspections, has pushed forward literacy work in the Asian and Pacific Region and it has many great achievements.

In order to strengthen academic exchanges and cooperation in adult education in the Asian and Pacific Region, with the support of ASPBAE, the Beijing Adult Education Association has planned to start a workshop on the "Basic Theoretical Knowledge of Adult Education" which will mainly focus on introducing various kinds of adult education in China. The main topics include: Illiteracy Ellimination and Farmers' Education (in China) Cadres Education (in China) Workers' Education (in China) Continuous Engineering Education (in China) Social Education (in China) Distance Education (in China) History of Chinese Adult Education; Policies and Administrative System of Chinese Adult Education; and Present Status and Task for Education of Workers of Chinese Industry and Commerce. We welcome the participation of group members of ASPBAE. Finally, I wish to bring some good news to you. **Dictionary of Adult Education** which was compiled by experts and scholars from nine provinces and municipalities

under the direction of the Beijing Adult Education Association was published in the spring of 1990. We are greatly honored to have received the attention and financial assistance from ASPBAE. The dictionary will be translated into English and will be published next year. It will also be available outside China to serve as a reference work for adult educators in the Asian and Pacific Region and countries all over the world. We welcome criticism and comments from our colleagues and friends.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL ADULT EDUCATORS

Usa Duongsaa

My dear adult educators,

What are you doing

When the world is smouldering with the fire of war

with a build-up of armament which can destroy the world

many times over

And when the world's fate is decided by only a handful of people

What are you doing

When human rights and freedom are abused

as people's power is snatched away by some self-proclaimed leaders

What are you doing

When the ozone layer is depleted, bit by bit, hole by hole

And the forests are cleared, tree by tree, forest by forest

So the world becomes hot, the land becomes dry

What are you doing

When the world is filled with cigarette smoke

Rotten and smelly litter strewn here and there and everywhere

And thick black exhaust fumes lingering on the road, car after car

What are you doing

When lush forest reserve is turned into an exclusive golf course

or a luxury tourist resort

Fertile land becomes a housing estate

or is flooded over in a dam area

And natural resources -- the forests, species of wild flora and fauna
Watersheds, mountains, beach, sea, and corals --
Are scarcely left for the future generations to appreciate, study, and
conserve.

What are you doing
When AIDS is spreading like wild fire, from one person to another,
in one sector after another
And alcohol, amphetamines, sleeping pills, anti-depressants, and drugs
become the sixth major food group for some people
What are you doing
When vegetables and fruits are laced with pesticides
Chicken and pork are full of growth hormones
Seafood are soaked in formalene, instead of ice, for
freshness and crispness
And dry foods are tainted with artificial colours and flavours,
carcinogenic preservatives and additives
Until even you don't know anymore what is safe to eat.

What are you doing
when parents pressurize their young daughters to go sell their bodies
to a thousand men just for the sake of a pick-up truck,
a video-recorder, or a number of pillars for a new house
And a large number of children become enslaved
threatened, tortured, and overworked,
in exchange of each day's meagre meals

What are you doing
When farmers who toil in the ricefields have to buy rice to eat
Rural folks have to migrate, to become cheap labour in the cities
Hilltribes are brought to perform their traditional New Year Dance
to entertain paying tourists, 365 days a year
And slum-dwellers are forced out of their makeshift shelter
with nowhere to go
What are you doing
When condominiums tower high over temple tops
Prostitutes outnumber monks
And Power, authority and money are revered more than virtues.

What are you doing?
My dear adult educators
Are you waiting to see how much this year's budget will be?
Are you waiting for the policies to be formulated?
Are you waiting to see who will be your new boss?
Are you waiting for motivation, rewards, or other morale boosters
before you will finally get to do something?

My dear adult educators
Until when will you wait?
Until when will you close your ears, your eyes, your thoughts,
and your heart?

Don't you know that the world simply cannot wait?

And neither can people's problems

The longer you wait, the more damage is done

to the world and its people.

When the environment is destroyed

When humanity is extinct

When rural areas become cemeteries, and the cities become hell

Who will participate in the vocational training that you organize?

Who will come read at the village reading centres that you put up?

Who will listen to radio lessons that you broadcast?

Who will become adult learners for your many teachers to teach?

And what will you be doing yourself?

My dear adult educators

Do you know that you have the power, the potential?

Do you know that you carry many people's hope?

If only you will open your eyes to see, open your ears to hear,

open wide your thoughts and your heart.

You will know just how far the world has turned

just what problems we are facing

and just what is to be done

Then you will realize that these are your responsibilities,

AND THIS IS WHAT ADULT EDUCATION IS ALL ABOUT.

My dear adult educators

Do you know that you have the power, the potential?

Do you know that you carry many people's hope?

If only you will stretch out your hand

to reach and hold the hands of the many

people and organizations, surrounding you and waiting for you

If only you will take a step forward

to listen, to learn, to act on problems

THEN THERE MAY STILL BE TOMORROW FOR ALL OF US.

AN EMERGING ADULT LITERACY PROSPECT FOR FIJI

Adele M.E. Jones

Background

Amidst all the talk of adult literacy and raising consciousness for it which affected Fiji as much as others in the International Literacy year (ILY), there was an irritating and nagging awareness that little was actually happening in the country in terms of adult literacy. Certainly, much was being done in 1990 to get people thinking and talking about the importance of literacy. An awareness raising week for non-formal education was held in May, with functions in Suva attended by non-formal educators and participants from various parts of the country. One day of this week was devoted to literacy issues. While the public forums, oratory contests and awareness raising functions were held during those early months of ILY however, some of us asked ourselves what was happening in relation to adult literacy? The answers or lack of them were disturbing, so to gauge an indication of need, the Non-formal Education team at the University of the South Pacific (USP) decided to advertize an adult literacy class, which the Fiji Association of Non-Formal Educators (FANFE) agreed to fund (Jones, 1990a). Large advertizements were placed in local papers and the class times and entry criteria (i.e., those who had not attended school or had attended only a few years of primary school or had attended primary but not attended secondary) were broadcast in three languages by the Fiji Broadcasting Commission.

The beginning of the adult literacy program in Suva

Four classes, each of one hour, began on 30th July. Initially three volunteer tutors were involved, from the department of Education (USP), the Fiji Curriculum Development Unit and an expatriate school teacher, also studying at USP. Classes were held daily.

In the August session, 48 students registered for the second intensive course. Funding (for the lecture rooms at the YWCA where classes were held) continued until mid November when certificates were given to all who had participated in Adult Basic Education classes. The number of tutors over that period increased with seven regular and other occasional volunteers involved. Close to 100 students of various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds took part in classes over that

four months. A large number of these were regular students, attending several times each week. Classes were held in English and Fijian. This intensive program bore quite remarkable results in many areas.

Adult literacy tutor training

What became obvious from this response in Suva alone, was the urgent need to produce materials appropriate for adult learners in the Pacific and to train tutors for adult literacy. While volunteer tutors had given of their time (as they continue to do under the 1991 FANFE Adult Literacy program) to a large extent they relied on materials and methodological direction from the Course Co-ordinator from the Department of Education, USP.

Later in 1990, discussions between the Non-formal Education Team at USP and the Head of Continuing Education, USP lead to another venture, an Adult Literacy Tutor Training Workshop. This was held from October 22 to November 2 under the auspices of these two departments at the University. It was co-ordinated and facilitated by this writer who has a background in Adult Literacy/Basic Education in Australia. Volunteer tutors from the USP/FANFE classes also took practical "lesson sessions" with workshop participants. A guest facilitator visiting from the Scottish Community Education Council, also involved in adult literacy tutor training in Britain, was a valuable support in the workshop.

The twelve participants were from government and non-government organizations, who also sponsored them for the workshop. In the second week of the workshop, which ran from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. daily, participants tutored on a one-to-one or small group basis in their own organizations or in the USP/FANFE adult literacy classes. Tutoring was done in Pacific languages as well as in English. A videotape was produced at the request of the participants, to show the various activities and methodological approaches which could be used with adult groups. This can be made available and has already been requested by community organizations and adult educators. It is produced in English with Fijian (Bau and Kadavu), Hindi and Rotuman inputs. USP Centres in two other regional countries have also requested these workshops. It is also intended that this workshop be available as an elective for accreditation towards the Certificate of Non-formal Education which is also conducted by distance education and the summer school mode by the Department of Education USP.

Current development in adult literacy provision and training

In 1991 the Department of Youth and Sport (Ministry of Education) has made funds available to FANFE to continue adult literacy classes. The first session is being held at the YWCA centre again, this time organized by FANFE members with some involvement of YWCA personnel. Again the registration fee is minimal and tutors are volunteers. FANFE has also requested the Institute of Education (the research and consultancy unit within the Department of Education USP) for an Adult Literacy Tutor Training Workshop and a training session for the adult literacy coordinators of Fiji. Clearly the Department sees its role in terms of such training and material development with important NGOs like FANFE and YWCA providing classes. FANFE has also proposed nine other centres (8 on Viti Levu and 1 on Vanua Levu) for adult literacy classes. Co-ordinators of these centres are involved in other full time employment, hence the importance of training sessions for them with clear guidelines on planning and implementing programs.

The other major development in the area of adult literacy in Fiji is in regard to education and training in the prison system. The Institute of Education has again been approached in regard to providing the expertise for training of adult literacy tutors to work with the prison population. This is a new venture for Fiji as the Prison Service has recently sought the services of a British consultant in regard to a 'macro' plan for prison education. As it has turned out, the USP input is quite significant in this regard because of the adult literacy training and provision discussed above. It is envisaged that tutors for the prison program will be teachers or retired teachers and will receive payment for their services, unlike the tutors in other classes to date.

Material development

Again, the involvement of the USP trainer/educator is important both in regard to development of materials and the training of the tutor to develop and assess materials. While materials for Adult Literacy/Basic Education from Australia and Britain are readily available, there is a strong argument for developing materials suitable to this culture. In fact this is already underway (Jones, 1990b).

A small group of young women from the first Adult Basic Education session (1990) who had some secondary schooling have been working with the co-ordinator to produce basic reading material/booklets using community development themes. Some of these were made available to tutors for use in

classes. Some materials development also took place in the Adult Literacy Tutor Training Workshop. This is a specialized area which can involve community workers and adult educators themselves, but workshopping is essential. Funding sources will later be pinpointed for the publication of some of this material.

Finally links have already been established with adult literacy workers/trainers in The Solomon Islands, the Scottish Community Education Council, tutors in the Fiji literacy programs and participants in the Adult Literacy Tutor Training Workshops in regard to a simple newsletter for sharing ideas and experiences in Adult Literacy/Basic Education. This is a simple endeavour which will be co-ordinated through the Department and Institute of Education, USP and could also be incorporated into regional community/adult education publications such as the FANFE newsletter and its proposed new journal of non-formal education in Fiji and The Solomon Alternative in The Solomon Islands. Its aims would be to keep grassroot literacy workers in touch with practical ideas and innovations. Video tapes could operate in a similar fashion. Regular communication with other groups and projects such as the South Pacific Literacy Project (focussing on primary school literacy) have been important even though aims and methodology differ somewhat. It has been important that as much regional communication as possible develop in the whole area of literacy and basic education, particularly from our perspective, for adults and out of school youth.

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Editor's Note
Contributions are invited for the next issue of the **Courier** to be published in April 1992. Please send your contribution to
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